



GRANDE RONDE UNIT



Management Framework Plan



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AKER DISTRICT, OREGON

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The national resource lands and the important surface and subsurface resources are destined to play an increasingly important role in the growth of the West. Careful and skillful management is required to meet the challenges of steadily growing demands for a variety of products and services while also protecting the land and its resources. The surest way to accomplish this is through organized, integrated planning, followed by a systematic management plan.

For the past several years, the staff of the Baker District of the Bureau of Land Management has been involved in an extensive planning process. (See next page for a synopsis of the complete Planning System). Initially, a resource inventory was completed to ascertain what resources are present and to what extent they are being used. In addition, opportunities to develop all resources to their fullest potential was investigated. Needless to say, many conflicts between resources resulted.

A Management Framework Plan is a general and multiple-use plan prepared to guide management of the national resource lands. It provides a FRAMEWORK for systematic and balanced management as well as reconciling land and resource use conflicts. The overall purpose is to provide for the wisest long-term use and management of your lands and resources.

Public participation is a vital element in the development of this plan. At a series of public meetings, a variety of agencies, organizations, industry representatives and individuals are being asked to provide important assistance and recommendations on what future management should be. Information, ideas and suggestions from all these sources will be incorporated into this management guidance. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and submit any other comments you may have to the Bureau of Land Management, District Office, P.O. Box 589, Baker, Oregon 97814. Our telephone number is 503-523-6391, Extension 281.

The guidance provided in the Plan will be subject to all current and future laws and regulations. Moreover, the plan, when completed, may be updated in response to additional data and changes in social, economic and resource management needs. Since BLM has no authority to effect management controls on private and state lands, the recommendations refer only to national resource lands.

Your continuing assistance in determining resource management direction is appreciated. As we strive to implement and improve this plan, we welcome your comments and suggestions at any time.


Albert Romeo
District Manager

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BLM'S PLANNING SYSTEM
Design for balanced systematic
land and resource management

The step by step approach to the BLM Planning System is as follows:

INFORMATION GATHERING

Actual planning begins with the gathering of data for all natural resources in the planning area. These resources include lands, recreation, wildlife habitat, watershed, timber, livestock forage, and minerals. Information is secured from many sources including resource inventories, government entities, user groups, and individuals. This is a key part of the system since the data is an information base upon which interdisciplinary planning is undertaken to analyze the potential of the land and identify and resolve land use and resource use conflicts.

UNIT RESOURCE ANALYSIS

Once the above data is collected, each of the resource categories is analyzed as to what action or management will give the optimum results for that resource alone. No consideration is given as to the effects such actions will have on the other resources involved. We call this process "tunnel vision".

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLANNING PROCESS

This is a three-step process wherein the basic information from the unit resource analysis is critically analyzed and developed into a land management plan. The three steps are as follows:

1. Activity Recommendations

Using information from the unit resource analysis and the "tunnel vision approach", resource specialists develop specific recommendations for each of the seven resource categories.

2. Multiple Use Recommendations

This step involves evaluation of recommendations for the seven resources. At this point, conflicts become evident between some of the recommendations. Many of these conflicts are minor and can be accommodated by better coordination between the uses of the various resources involved. Other conflicts are major and it will be impossible to accommodate one resource recommendation without denying the recommendation for some other resource or resources. This is the "trade off" portion of the planning process.

3. Public Participation and Decisions

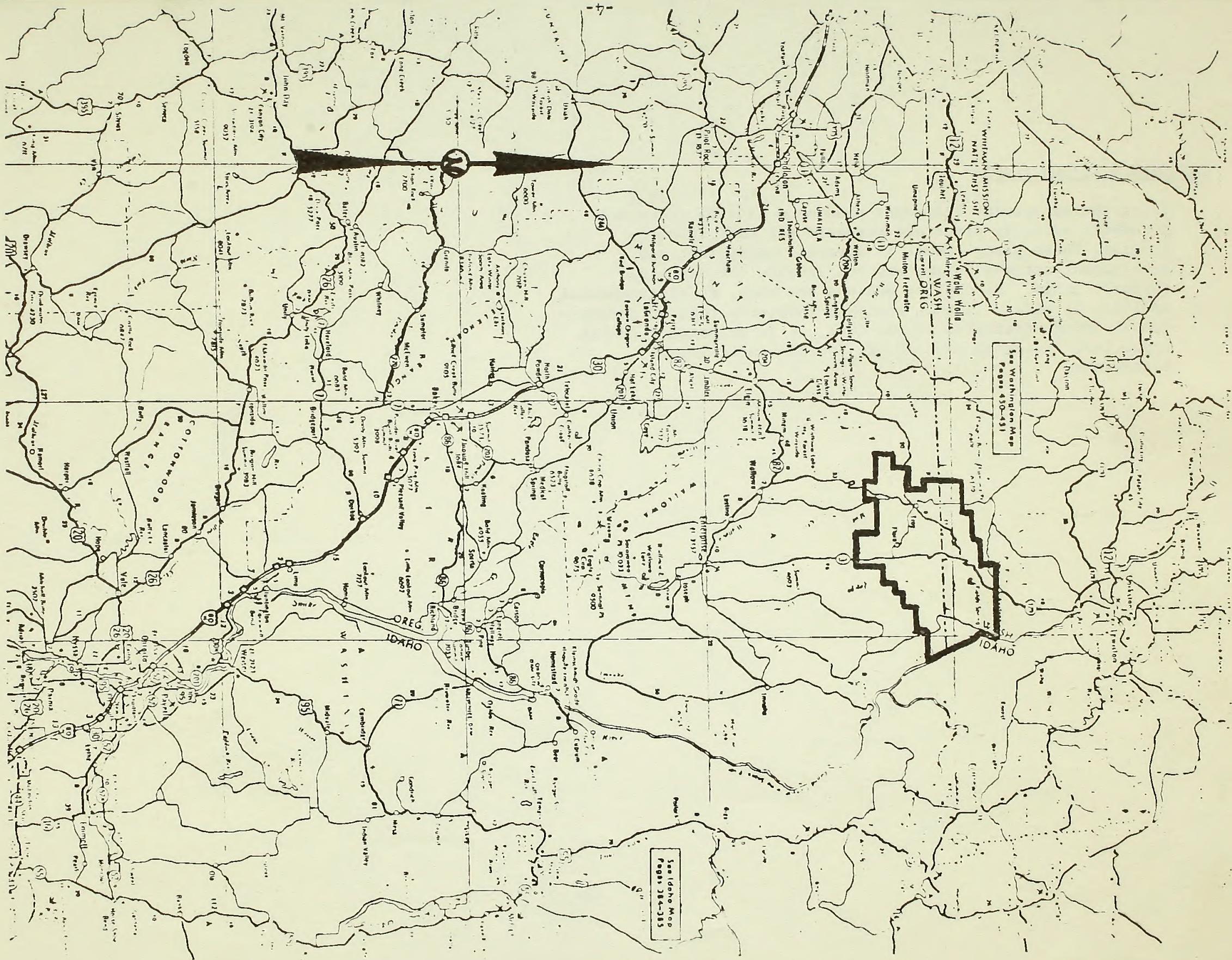
(The stage we are in now.)

Public participation is one of the most important aspects of the planning process. Up to this stage, the active assistance and participation of the public helped identify resources, problems and needs. At this point - between the resolution of resource use conflicts and the decision on what future management should be - public meetings are held to obtain public ideas, suggestions and recommendations.

After full consideration of input from public meetings, decisions are made concerning resolution of conflicts and resource management direction. These decisions are documented in a framework plan which sets broad objectives and constraints to guide management of the land and its resources. In this plan, the widest range of beneficial uses is sought, including optimum production of products and services from the national resource lands consistent with acceptable environmental quality and preservation of natural values.

MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS

Using the management framework plan as a guiding reference document, activity plans are prepared for each resource program. These plans result in specific management and development actions to protect and enhance the national resource lands. Before any actions are made, an environmental analysis is made. If this analysis indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement is required, it is prepared. Public input is an integral part of all Environmental Impact Statements.

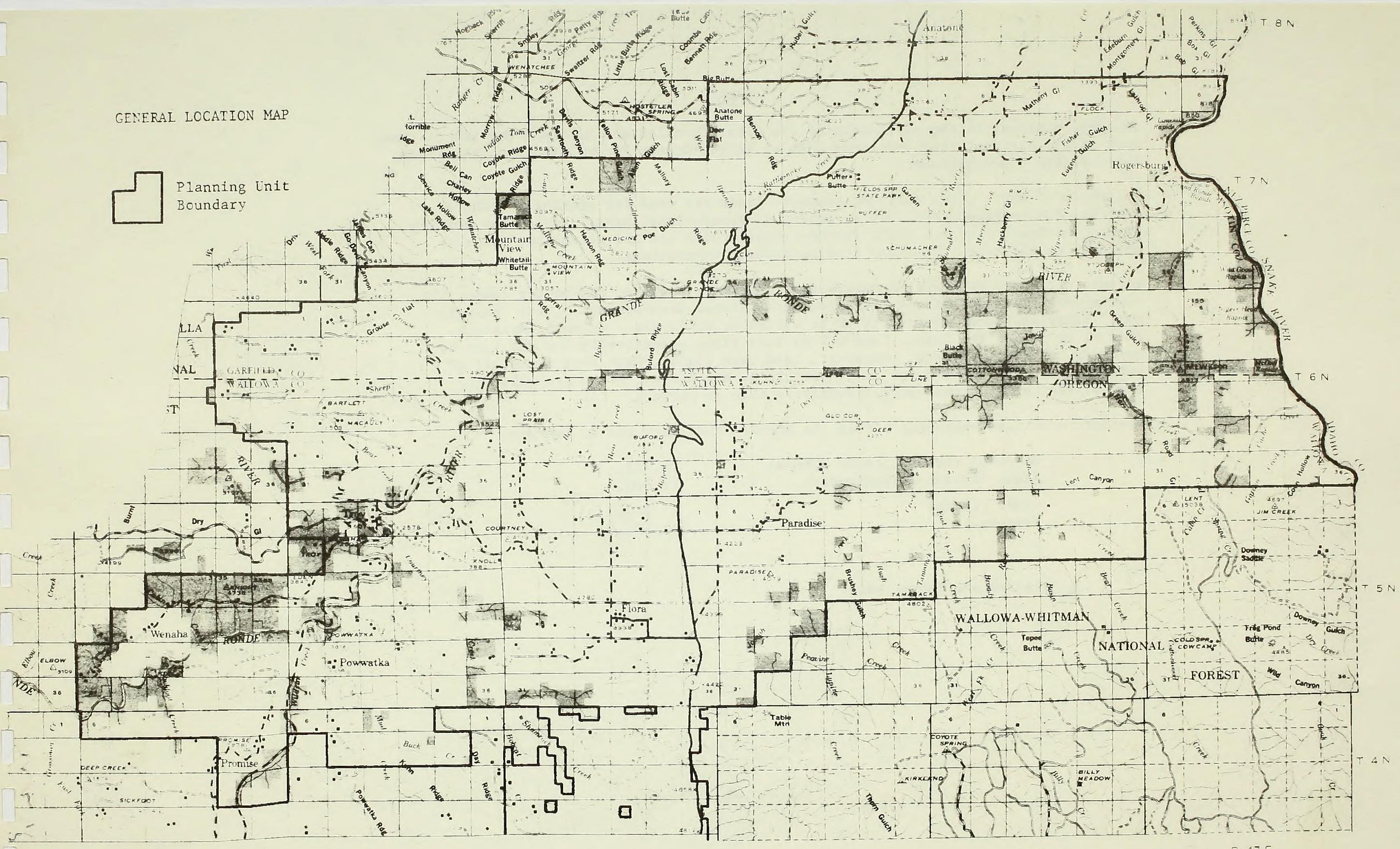


GENERAL
LOCATION
MAP

GENERAL LOCATION MAP



Planning Unit Boundary



LANDS

In 1969, pursuant to the provisions of the Classification and Multiple Use Act of 1964, most of the national resource lands (NRL's) in the Grande Ronde Unit were classified for multiple use management.

For the most part, these national resource lands are used for grazing, wildlife habitat, timber production, and a variety of recreational uses. During the hunting season, national resource lands receive considerable use and attention, but they are open at all times for those seeking outdoor experiences.

Because early-day settlers homesteaded or otherwise acquired the better lands, the remaining NRL are largely unsuited for agricultural development. These "passed over" lands were once considered to be virtually worthless. In most instances, this is no longer the case. Land values have risen dramatically and the land is becoming relatively scarce. Moreover, land uses change. What this reservoir of public lands will be used for in the future is not known. It is probable that some of them will be used more intensively than at present.

Statistics on land ownership within the Grande Ronde Unit are as follows:

National resource lands (NRL's)	24,733
State (Oregon & Washington)	19,706 ^{1/}
Other Federal	315 ^{1/}
Private	228,188 ^{1/}

1/ Figures are approximate

LANDS

RECOMMENDATION

1. Cooperate with State and local government in recreational site development.
2. Initiate exchanges to block up land in areas that would provide the greatest public benefit.
3. When withdrawals are found to be in excess of these needs, request revocation of the withdrawal, so the lands will be available for public use.
4. No residential, commercial, or other intensive use areas will be identified at this time.

ANALYSIS

1. Lands along rivers receive heavy use by hunters, fishermen, campers and others. Additional camping facilities are needed. State and local governments have shown past interest in cooperating in the development of such sites. Developments of this nature are therefore recommended, provided that each site is thoroughly analyzed to assure that any adverse effects on other resources are kept minimal.
2. Under present laws and regulations, land exchange is the only method by which the Bureau can acquire land or consolidate holdings. There are scattered federal lands that have only limited public values. When opportunities arise, these lands should be exchanged for lands the public could better utilize.
3. There are some tracts, generally along rivers, which are withdrawn but are in excess to the need for the project, or in some cases the project abandoned. Where these withdrawals restrict uses which would benefit the public or impede proper management of the land, BLM will request removal of the withdrawal.
4. No commercial, industrial, urban-suburban expansion areas are identified. The indicators of expansion-upward population trends, expanding transportation systems, economic projections and current land use - do not indicate a need for identification of NRL at this time.

LANDS

5. Terminate unauthorized uses of national resource lands.
6. Request cadastral survey of NRL which fronts on the Grande Ronde River and other problem tracts.
5. The more common types of unauthorized use of NRL in the Grande Ronde area are grazing, fencing, and occupancy associated with livestock production. These trespasses will be terminated as they occur.
6. Part of the problem of unauthorized use of NRL is associated with difficulty of delineating lines between private and public land. Surveying and marking the boundaries of NRL along the river will facilitate public use of NRL and solve several potential land status problems.

MINERALS

The Unit is essentially without value for mineral production. This is probably predicated by the fact that except in parts of the deep canyons of the Grande Ronde River and the Snake River, the Unit is covered by up to 4,000 feet of barren basalt rock. The only known mineralization is the occurrence of gold along the Snake River in Asotin County, but there has never been any significant production.

High grade limestone also outcrops in the same area in the Snake River Canyon but due to the remoteness and preservation designation of the Canyon it will probably will never be quarried.

Although the U.S. Geological Survey considers the western part of the Unit as being valuable for oil and gas, there appears to be little likelihood for such exploration at least in the near future. Rock suitable for road construction and fill material is plentiful. However, due to the sparse population there is little demand for such material.

MINERALS

RECOMMENDATION

1. Legitimate mineral exploration and mining should be encouraged. Mineral withdrawals should be held to an absolute minimum.
2. The Western portion of the Unit is classified by the USGS as being prospectively valuable for oil and gas. Except for the unroaded area along the Grande Ronde River above Wildcat Creek, exploration should be encouraged. Methods of exploration and development of oil and gas can be regulated.
3. The USGS lists the lower part of the Grande Ronde River canyon as being prospectively valuable for coal. This deposit should be held in reserve.
4. The isolated limestone deposits along the Snake River could be of economic value if they could be barged to a ready market in the Portland area. But, due to lack of transportation without further daming of the Snake River, it is recommended that these deposits be left undeveloped.

ANALYSIS

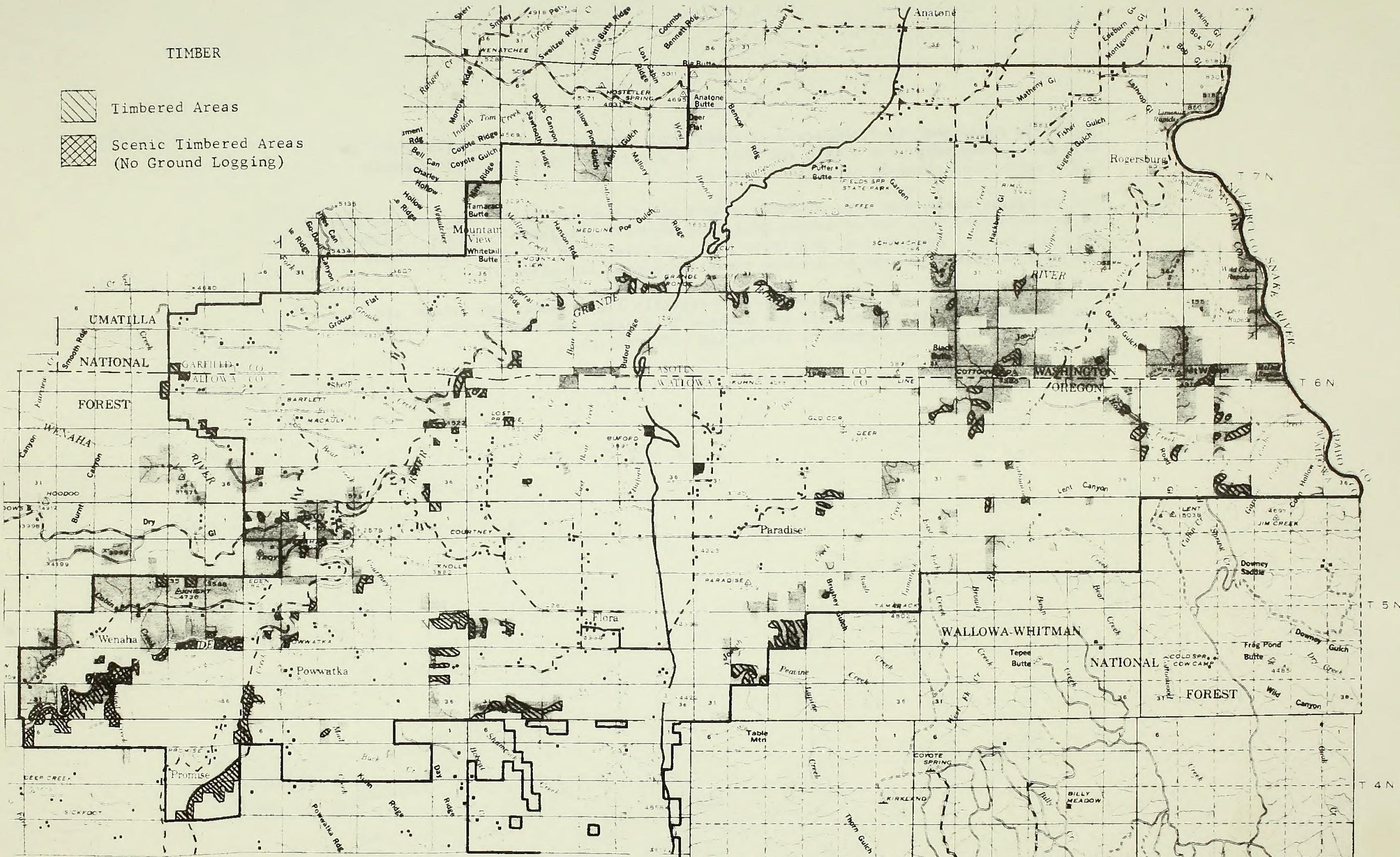
1. Most mineral development is essential to national needs and growth. The "Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970", fosters and encourages the orderly and economic development of domestic mineral resources. Virtually all lands should be open to prospecting and mining.
2. Discovery of oil and gas has been unsuccessful in Oregon and Washington. Discovery of oil or gas would be of great economic aid to the northwest and a partial relief to the shortages of oil and gas. The unroaded area along the river is relatively small and would have little overall effect on oil or gas exploration.
3. At this point in time, the country has many coal deposits that can be mined more easily and with less disturbance to other resources than those located here. These should be held in reserve until some future date when they are more in need.
4. The development and mining of limestone found in the Unit would contribute to the economy of the area, but the detrimental effects on the environment caused by mining, along with public sentiment against further daming of the Snake River, more than compensates for the beneficial aspects of the proposal.

TIMBER

Timbered Areas



Scenic Timbered Areas (No Ground Logging)



Timber

There are approximately 1,600 acres of commercial timberland or area classified as intensive management area within the Unit. In addition, there are approximately 1,000 acres classified as protection area.

The intensive management area produces nearly all the commercial timber harvest and is characterized by sites of deeper soils and adequate available moisture. Principal tree species are Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, western larch and white fir. Most of the wood harvested is used to produce dimension lumber and plywood.

The protection areas are characterized by generally light stands and volume per acre, but are primarily classified this way because thin soils and steep rocky slopes may present erosion, reforestation or harvesting difficulties.

TIMBER

RECOMMENDATION

1. Timber production on the majority of this land will be emphasized with priority given to harvesting mature, over-mature and damaged trees.

Timberland of this category lying in the canyon along the Grande Ronde River above Wildcat Creek is excluded from this type of management.

- A. Cut to remove a substantial crown and root opening in the stand.
- B. Remove any remaining overstory and poorly spaced trees after reproduction is well established.
- C. Continue the ongoing thinning program.
- D. Use modern technology to stop insect and animal caused timber losses.
- E. Investigate the economic and physical feasibility of an irrigation, fertilization and genetic tree improvement program.

ANALYSIS

1. All resources will be considered in planning the timber program. Surrounding timbered lands such as those in Protective Management Areas will provide certain kinds of wildlife and recreation benefits not found in intensive management areas.

At the same time, considerable care will be taken in the selection of timber stands to ensure that our actions will not be detrimental to critical wildlife habitat and species or watershed quality.

All logging will conform to the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

- A. This cutting practice will help eliminate the stagnated condition that exists in some of our timbered area.
- B. This will utilize all remaining over-mature timber and completely release the established reproduction.
- C. Wherever feasible, thinning will increase stand growth.
- D. Considerable damage and loss occurs in established timber stands due to insects and animals. Any successful methods employed to lessen this damage will result in a direct increase in volume production.
- E. Wherever feasible, irrigation, fertilization, and genetic tree improvement will increase stand growth.

TIMBER

RECOMMENDATION

- F. Fence or use other means, where necessary, to keep livestock out of critical areas where reproduction is not getting started due to trampling. Do not fence to keep wildlife out except in extreme cases where their presence prohibits tree establishment.
- G. Selected roads and spurs will be closed after logging.
- 2. Postpone logging on all timberland along the Grande Ronde River above Wildcat Creek until such time as logging systems have been improved to the point where insignificant environmental damage would be done by logging.

ANALYSIS

- F. It is difficult to get a good stand of reproduction started in many of the draw bottoms or other areas near waters due to the trampling and browsing of animals. These areas constitute some of our better timber production sites and cannot be managed for maximum timber production without protection from these animals. Those areas, where growth of young trees is hindered by livestock, will be fenced until trees reach sufficient height to prevent grazing of the tree top.

Although wildlife contribute to the trampling and browsing, livestock are the worst offenders and the damage done by wildlife seldom prohibits tree establishment.
- G. There are a number of roads which were built to facilitate timber harvesting. When these roads or use of these roads create conflicts with other resources, they will be blocked, waterbarred and reseeded.
- 2. This portion of the canyon is a scenic, remote area that receives considerable recreation use by boaters, fishermen and hunters. It is believed that conventional ground logging operations along with associated road construction would cause damage in excess of the value of the timber production. If aerial logging is perfected to the point where scattered isolated trees could be salvaged on an economical basis, logging the area should be considered.

TIMBER

RECOMMENDATION

Protection Areas

1. Manage timber resource within this category to maintain site quality using the following guidelines.
 - A. Postpone logging on the remainder of the sites until logging systems improve and insignificant damage will occur to other resources.
 - B. Continue the practice of not including these areas in the allowable cut until logging systems improve and the resources can be protected.
 - C. Apply forest management and improvement practices which will improve the quality of the timber wherever practical.

ANALYSIS

Protection Areas

1. These areas generally are on steep slopes with thin, rocky soils. Attempting to intensively harvest these areas may destroy the timber site. The small returns often would not justify the site protection measures necessary in terms of both time and money.

Timber volume on these areas is not included in the allowable cut. Except where site protection can be safeguarded, timber removal should be postponed until logging systems are improved to the point where site damage is tolerable. These areas will provide a "storage" of old growth volume for this future date.

LIVESTOCK FORAGE

There are approximately 18,875 acres of NRL in the Unit that are leased for grazing purposes. This leased acreage furnishes approximately 2,200 AUMs (animal unit months) of livestock forage for 48 different operators.

Other than a vegetative survey made in 1968, to determine carrying capacity, very little has been done in the Unit in the line of studies to determine range condition and trend, useable grazing acreage, need for water development, fencing etc. This is chiefly due to lack of adequate funds and manpower to accomplish the work in the type of terrain and land pattern involved.

Grazing use varies considerably in the Unit depending on operator and location, but the majority of use on the national resource land comes in the spring or fall.

The most difficult problem encountered in grazing administration on NRL is application of grazing systems that meet the needs of the livestock involved, as well as the various other resources that are effected by livestock grazing. This problem stems from inadequate resource data, scattered land patterns and rough topography.

The following management guidelines are geared toward helping alleviate some of the problems associated with livestock grazing.

LIVESTOCK FORAGE

RECOMMENDATION

1. Initiate condition and trend studies where needed.
Obtain actual use records and make utilization studies.
2. Study to determine how much of the Unit is useable (physically) for livestock grazing.
3. Study to determine how much water development and fencing is possible and necessary to obtain proper livestock distribution.
4. Study to determine if any of the grazing allotments are suitable for implementation of allotment management plans.
5. Study to determine if adjustment of season-of-use and, if so, in which areas.
6. Continue to lease lands with forage available for livestock grazing.

ANALYSIS

1. At the present time, we lack adequate information on how much area is actually being grazed and the degree of use of the grazed area.
2. This information would point to the areas where future development will be necessary to allow maximum use of the area by livestock. We know that livestock distribution is a problem but the extent of the problem is not known.
3. Self-explanatory.
4. Some of the present grazing allotments might lend themselves to some type of allotment management plan. Because of the steep aspect of these lands, such plans may not be feasible, but where they could be implemented it would be advantageous to the resource to do so.
5. Winter or early spring grazing may be causing loss of vigor or death in the forage plants. Adjustments in season-of-use could improve this situation. Adjustments maybe necessary to alleviate conflicts with wildlife.
6. Leasing lands for grazing will provide forage to be used in conjunction with private lands. Additional forage will allow ranchers to produce more beef, thus adding to the economy of the community. At the same time, this use must be coordinated with other conflicting uses such as wildlife, recreation, and timber, so the best use is made of any particular site.

WATERSHED

Watersheds are drainage areas from which water drains toward a single channel. Conditions on these watersheds, whether it is a hillside or a large basin, to a large extent determine degree of erosion and the quality and quantity of water produced. Thus, one of BLM's major land management objectives is to maintain adequate vegetative cover to stabilize the watersheds, keep the vital topsoil in place and prevent or minimize sediment flow into water channels.

Watershed conditions and the degree of sediment produced vary greatly according to soil type, extent and type of vegetative cover and extent of use by man and his livestock.

Domestic livestock have by far the most significant impact on vegetation and consequently on watershed quality. In almost every instance livestock grazing, properly managed, can be used as a tool for improving watershed conditions. However, it must also be remembered, poorly controlled grazing can be extremely destructive.

Because of their widespread effect and our ability to control grazing, livestock are our primary tool in improving watershed conditions.

Aside from livestock there are a number of other activities which affect watershed conditions and consequently require management to prevent watershed damage. These include unstable soil, timber harvesting, off-road vehicle use and mineral exploration.

WATERSHED

RECOMMENDATION

1. Initiate Phase I Watershed Studies.
2. After problem areas have been identified, try and initiate cooperative management plans with adjacent land owners so livestock use could be managed in a manner that will be beneficial to the livestock.
3. Manipulate livestock on over-grazed areas.
 - a. Fence
 - b. Change season-of-use
 - c. Defer grazing
 - d. Change number of grazing livestock permitted.
 - e. Develop water

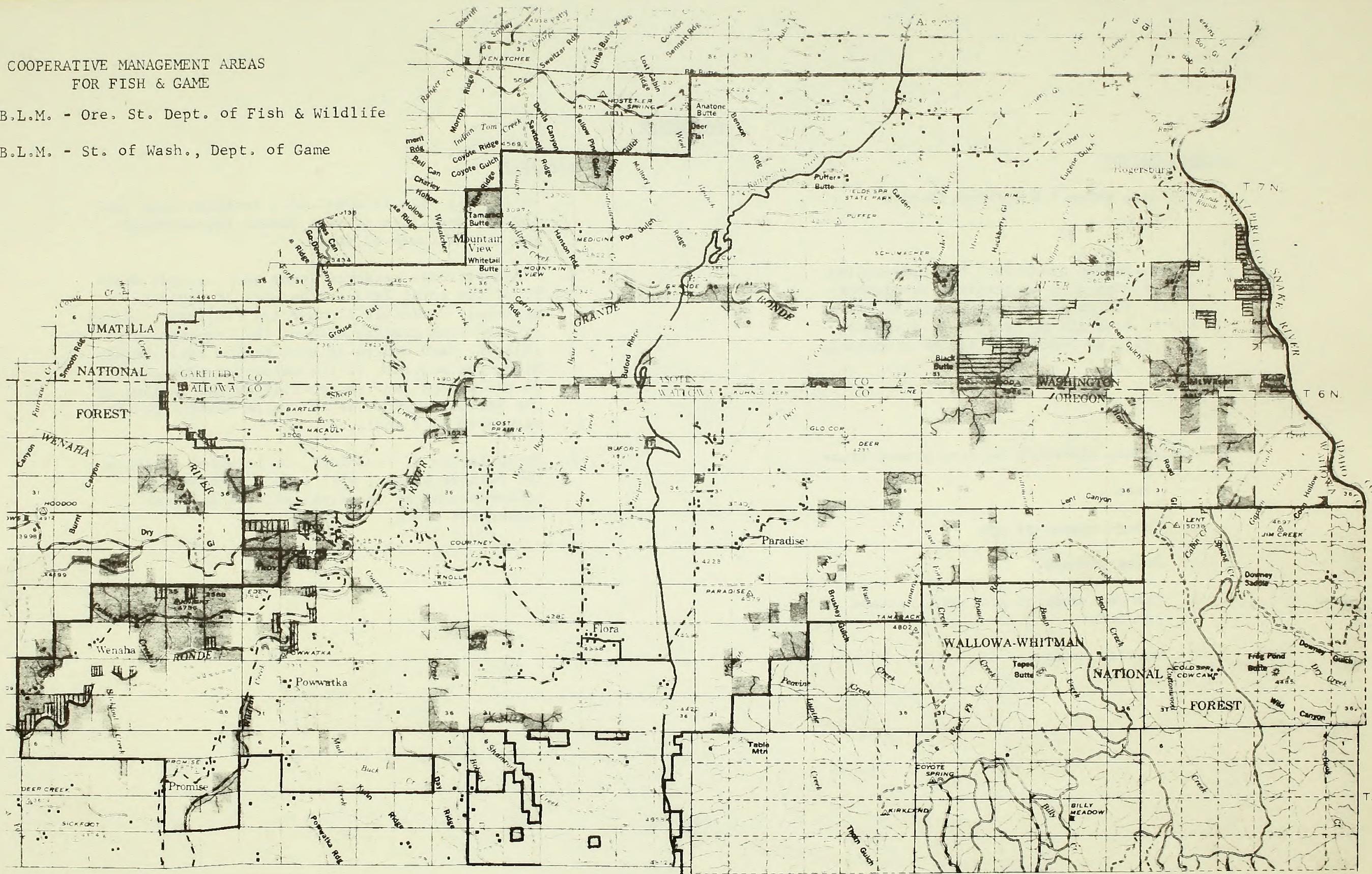
ANALYSIS

1. Until this data is available, problem areas cannot be identified to meet Bureau requirements for expenditures of funds.
2. Since national resource lands make up only about 9% of the total land in the unit it would be extremely difficult to have any realistic control of livestock grazing without the cooperation of adjacent land owners on such broken land pattern. Also, the majority of the watershed problems are on the deeded land so controlling the grazing on the NRL alone would be of little benefit to the watershed as a whole.
3. Manipulation of livestock, implemented by use of the methods listed, will reduce erosion and sedimentation by re-establishing a desireable vegetative cover.

COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREAS FOR FISH & GAME

111 B.L.M. - Ore. St. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

 B.L.M. - St. of Wash., Dept. of Game



WILDLIFE

One of the major resources found in the Grande Ronde Resource Area is the wildlife habitat. The diversity of habitats, both terrestrial and aquatic, contain a variety of vertebrate and invertebrate animals. The area provides 24,733 acres of National Resource Lands to the wildlife habitat in the area. Principal big game species found in the area are doves, mountain quail, valley quail, turkey, ruffed and blue grouse, pheasants, chukar partridge, cottontail rabbits, ducks and geese. Many other species of wildlife use the habitat in the area such as coyotes, bobcats, numerous rodents, small birds and raptors. Endangered species identified would be the American peregrine falcon. Resident bald eagles are known to inhabit the area. Several of the streams and rivers support excellent fisheries, both resident and anadromous. Steelhead and salmon fishing is very popular. Many streams also serve as major spawning sites.

Both non-consumptive and consumptive use of wildlife on the area is increasing each year. Hunter days easily exceed 50,000 with fishing adding another 60 to 70,000 days. These figures are estimates based on the percentage of national resource lands to total area used by hunters and fishermen.

Due to the demonstrated importance of wildlife to Oregon and Washington as a whole and to local economics, the management and development of wildlife habitat is considered as a prime objective in the overall analysis to fit into the scheme of multiple use management. The following guidelines, and those of other resource programs, are designed to provide protection to the wildlife resource where ever possible.

WILDLIFE
"Rocky Mountain Elk"

RECOMMENDATION

5. Maintain the existing cooperative agreement with the OSWC for the Wenaha Game Management area.
6. Strive to improve legal hunter access into NRL elk areas but do not increase physical access. This would include:
 - a. A public relations program to improve landowner-hunter relations
 - b. Development of new land exchanges, easements and/or rights-of-way.

ANALYSIS

5. The existing Wenaha Game Management Unit situation has shown an improvement in elk management.
6. National resource lands along Courtney Creek and Cottonwood Creek are restricted from optimum elk hunter use by private land closure. Such lands should be made legally accessible for hunting to more properly harvest excess elk populations.

PAGE OUT OF SEQUENCE.

SEE PAGE 32 FOR RECOMMENDATIONS 1 - 4

FOR "ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK" SECTION.

WILDLIFE
"Mule Deer"

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the quality and quantity of mule deer habitat, specifically winter range, by:

1. Stop all livestock overgrazing; implement proper grazing systems.
2. Develop food and cover wherever possible.
3. Improve deer habitat along streams by live-stock management rather than exclusion by fences.
4. Improve legal and physical access to certain national resource lands by:
 - a. Land exchanges.
 - b. Easements
 - c. Rights-of-way
5. Work out cooperative management agreement with the Washington State Department of Game for lands in the area of the confluence of Joseph Creek, Grande Ronde River and Snake River.

ANALYSIS

Mule deer are a big game species of value secondary only to elk and they contribute significantly to the Grande Ronde Area's sport harvest values. The dependence of mule deer on a restricted area of winter range for survival emphasizes optimum habitat management.

1. Certain rangeland areas suffer from overgrazing, which removes grass, browse and forb food and cover needed by deer. This, in turn, increases competition between deer, elk, and cattle.
2. Increasing deer food and cover on winter ranges is necessary to compensate for unavailability of such by snow depth and wind chill.
3. Uncontrolled cattle grazing on stream banks remove excessive succulent forage and cover needed by lactating does and other deer using these areas.
4. NRL tracts in the unit's northeastern portion are legally and/or physically unavailable for public hunting. Sports harvest values are thus lost and a proper balance between deer numbers and habitat cannot be maintained.
5. The Washington State Department of Game has purchased several thousand acres of deeded land in this area that intermingles with approximately 2,000 acres of national resource land.

This management agreement should be similar to those worked out with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that have worked out quite successfully.

WILDLIFE
"Mule Deer"

RECOMMENDATION

6. Make seasonal vehicle closures of national resource lands within crucial wintering deer areas.
 - a. Work with local ORV clubs; snowmobiles, 4-Wheel drive organizations, etc.

ANALYSIS

6. Vehicle travel, especially snowmobiles, can frighten deer from their winter use areas during periods of stress.

WILDLIFE
"Furbearers"

RECOMMENDATION

Improve furbearer habitat along the Grande Ronde River, Joseph Creek, Horse Creek, Sickfoot Creek and Courtney Creek by:

1. Do not develop springs wherever possible just to attempt to increase stream flow.
2. Improve stream habitat through livestock management rather than exclusion.
3. Seeding and/or planting willows, cottonwood, poplars and aspen to increase food and cover.
4. Regulate recreation development and road construction to preserve water quality and streamside vegetation.
5. Maintain streamside buffer strips of riparian vegetation in logging areas.

ANALYSIS

Furbearers are a non-game wildlife species, offering their major public use in a non-consumptive capacity (except for authorized trapping). Their population status is being threatened by streamside habitat alterations, overgrazing and pollution. The exceptional presence of furbearers, notably otter, affords a uniquely pleasurable experience when observed and beaver contribute much to the establishment of ponds, increased waterflows, raising water levels and establishing marsh and wet meadow habitat.

1. Developing springs to increase stream flow could be more detrimental than beneficial. Also, the costs involved in order to have any noticeable effect on streams would be prohibitive.
2. Livestock concentrate along streams and are damaging trees and shrubs needed by furbearers.
3. Certain stream sites are either devoid of tree and shrub cover naturally or because of logging and grazing. Replanting would add furbearer food and cover.
4. Water quality is sometimes below optimum because of recreation use and/or road construction.
5. Logging activities can eradicate shrubs required by furbearers as food and cover.

WILDLIFE
"Turkey"

RECOMMENDATION

Expand turkey habitat within coniferous forest portions of the area by:

1. Recommending to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Game that they release birds at the most optimum sites.
2. Develop an overall turkey habitat management plan cooperatively with the Oregon Department of Fish and Game and the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests (where applicable).
3. Open up specified dense forest stands reseeding appropriate sites with perennial grasses and planting-seeding some mast-producing shrub, such as oak.
4. Do not preserve all open limbed fir and ponderosa pine trees for potential roosting sites.

ANALYSIS

1. The release of additional turkeys would be required to establish a base population.
2. Turkey introduction plans would have to be coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service in many areas since they administer the majority of potentially suitable wildlife habitat.
3. Dense forest stands do not contain good stands of perennial grass, required by turkey. The successful establishment of oak, such as Gambel's oak, would add a mast forage much preferred by turkey. Forest conversion areas reseeded with perennial grass would add valuable succulent forage.
4. Preserve what trees are believed to be of possible benefit for such use. Preserving all such trees would be wasteful and at times detrimental to other resources without doing any good.

WILDLIFE

"Chukar, Huns and Valley Quail"

RECOMMENDATION

Improve habitat for chukar, Hungarian partridge and valley quail by:

1. Improve cover and feed in selected stream drainages through livestock management.
2. Planting and/or reseeding grain, forbs or grasses wherever possible.
3. Improve legal and physical hunter access to national resource lands, including land exchange easements and right-of-way.
4. Eliminate application of herbicides and pesticides along Bureau of Land Management administered roadsides.
5. Retain streamside vegetation buffer strips within timber sale areas.

ANALYSIS

The Grande Ronde Unit contains over 100,000 acres of upland game bird habitat. The Snake River and Grande Ronde River breaks offer some of the finest chukar hunting available in northeastern Oregon.

1. Stream drainages are upland game bird concentration areas but riparian habitat is being damaged by livestock grazing.
2. Additional grain, forb and grass vegetation would add valuable food and cover.
3. Some national resource land tracts occupied by upland game are not legally or physically available for hunting, thus sport harvest values are lost and full utilization of surplus birds cannot be realized.
4. The concentration of upland game birds along roadsides seeking grit, seeds and dusting sites puts them in immediate contact with herbicides and pesticides. This could result in severe and immediate bird losses.
5. Logging activities can easily eradicate bird cover and food plants. Buffer strips reduce this loss significantly.

WILDLIFE
"Raptors"

RECOMMENDATION

Raptor habitat should be maintained in at least its present condition by:

1. Preserve existing snags and enough old decadent trees to furnish an adequate supply of replacements as old snags fall.
2. Permitting no human disturbance and/or harmful habitat alteration within a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius of any identified eagle, falcon, or osprey nesting site between March and July where practical.
3. Leaving all snags standing within a one mile radius of any identified eagle or osprey nest site.
4. Powerlines area-wide should be checked for possible eagle electrocution problems and corrected.
5. Conduct an intensive unit-wide inventory of all cliff sites and old growth forest areas to determine raptor use.

ANALYSIS

Bureau of Land Management policy, environmental policy precautions, State and Federal legislation and the policy of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has given precedence and authority for raptor habitat management. The increasing interrelationship awareness between man's influence and their effects on raptors places a responsibility on the Bureau as land managers, to preserve raptor habitat.

1. Snags are vital to raptors as nesting, feeding, perching and observation sites. Old snags are continually falling down and new ones are needed to replace them.
2. Human disturbance within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of eagle, falcon or osprey nests during the nesting season can result in nest abandonment, lost young or hatching failures.
3. The one mile radius for standing snags around active nests is critical for perching, observation, and feeding use.
4. Immature eagles are susceptible to powerline electrocution, given improper powerline design and location.
5. Basic field information is presently lacking to properly identify nesting sites and use of old growth timber.

WILDLIFE

"Reptiles and Amphibians"

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct extensive inventories on reptile and amphibian species' habitat to determine:

1. What species are present.
2. If any species are unique, rare or endangered.
3. Where crucial habitat is located and what limiting factors may be present.

ANALYSIS

At the present time, we have very little information on reptile or amphibians in the Unit so studies should be made to determine what species are present, possible endangered species and habitat needs.

WILDLIFE
"Fish"

RECOMMENDATION

Improve and/or maintain the habitat of anadromous and resident cold water fish and warm water game fish by:

1. Improve streamside cover by livestock management.
2. Correcting improper logging activities along all streams.
3. Planting trees, shrubs and grasses wherever necessary along streams.
4. Do not develop springs or streams to increase water flows.
5. Work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to carefully remove log jams and correct fall areas on streams.

ANALYSIS

The fisheries resource in general and the anadromous fisheries specifically are being constantly threatened by increased pollution effluent, loss of streamside and streambed habitat, increased dam construction blocking their movements, and nitrogen level super-saturation levels below dam sites. The fishery resource is of paramount value to sport harvest and commercial use interests alike and accounts for thousands to million of dollars revenue annually. Bureau policy during recent years, congressional legislation, and the policy of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have emphasized and improved management for fisheries habitat. The loss of habitat has been identified as the key element in steelhead and salmon population decrease.

1. and 2. Livestock grazing and logging along streams adds pollution to the water, removes streamside cover and sources of insect fish food, tramples spawning gravels and increases water temperature.
3. Specific stream locations, either naturally or through man's interference, have become devoid of stream vegetation and require rehabilitation.
4. Developing springs or streams to increase stream flow could be more detrimental than beneficial. Also, the costs involved in order to have any noticeable effect would be prohibitive.
5. Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife surveys identified several falls and log jams that are or could block upstream fish movement.

WILDLIFE
"Fish"

RECOMMENDATION

6. Install, if necessary, proper stream improvements to provide proper riffle:pool ratios.
7. Correct national resource land-oriented water pollution problems.
8. Cooperate with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Game in their efforts to release steelhead into the Grande Ronde system.
9. Leave adequate buffer strips of overstory and under-story vegetation along streams during logging activities.
10. Minimize road construction running parallel and in close proximity to streams. Allow no road construction within stream beds unless necessary to cross the stream. Where crossings are necessary, there should be bridges or arched large capacity culverts set so that fish passage is not hampered.
11. Reseed all disturbed soil areas resulting from logging or road construction with vegetation designed to reduce soil erosion. Emphasize end-hauling of road material over side-cost to reduce silt runoff sources.

ANALYSIS

6. Riffle:pool ratios in many streams have been identified as imbalanced from the 50:50 desired balance. Structures properly located and designed in streams could increase habitat quality, rearing area and spawning gravel amounts.
7. Self-explanatory.
8. Steelhead releases are required as mitigation for Snake River Dam losses.
9. Loss of streamside vegetation can increase water temperatures, reduce dissolved oxygen levels and eradicate key steelhead rearing areas.
10. Stream crossings can create slit deposits and block upstream movement. Culverts not large enough and set at too steep a grade tend to act as "nozzles" and restrict upstream fish movement.
11. Reseeding disturbed land sites prevents long term soil erosion and subsequent silt deposition in spawning gravels.

WILDLIFE

"Rocky Mountain Elk"

RECOMMENDATION

Improve and maintain Rocky mountain elk habitat by:

1. New roads constructed for permanent public use should be held to the very minimum necessary.
2. Restrict travel over existing roads and trails wherever possible, during critical periods such as calving seasons.
3. Opening up some selected dense timber stands and reseeding with desirable grass and forb elk forage species. Simultaneously preserve conifer "thicket" locations for elk cover.
4. Manage livestock to produce a maximum amount of elk forage; stop all livestock overgrazing.

ANALYSIS

Rocky mountain elk are the primary big game species within the Grande Ronde Unit. BLM administered lands contribute an average of 627 elk hunter days use by 104 hunters, for a harvest of 29 animals. The unit as a whole contributes 4048 hunter days, 764 hunters and a harvest of 375 elk. The local economy of Troy is geared toward elk hunting during elk season. Estimating the dollar value of elk hunting @ \$17.47/hunter day (1970 Nat'l. Survey of Fishing and Hunting), NRL's contribute \$10,954, the entire unit \$70,718. Within Wallowa County, elk are considered to have top priority management by the OSWC and maximum population levels are desired.

1. and 2. Roads and the human disturbance associated with them can interfere with elk migrations and add to winter stress on the animals; snowmobiles, all terrain vehicles, etc.
3. Dense timber stands (except for cover thickets) are "deserts" for elk. Opening such stands increases sunlight exposure and improves grass growth.
4. The direct competition between elk and cattle dictates the careful management of both to avoid overgrazing and a decrease in peak elk population. Since elk are less easily controlled when their populations reach an excess, cattle must be managed first.

WILDLIFE
"Habitat Expansion and Habitat Management"

RECOMMENDATION

I. Habitat Expansion

A. Big Game

1. Study extent of big game-domestic livestock competition on winter range.
2. Where conflict exists, try and correct problem through livestock management. If we are unable to correct the problem by this method, then the grazing leases should be cancelled and the area fenced.

II. Habitat Management

A. Big Game

1. Obtain hunter access. Easements or rights-of-way may have to be bought or traded for.
2. Maintain big game cover in the forested areas indicated.
(See overlay)

B. Upland Game Birds

1. Cooperate with game agencies in establishing grit stations in areas of heavy snowfall.
2. Study areas of wintering, brooding, breeding, and food requirements.
3. Plant small patches of alfalfa for winter deer food on flats along the Grande Ronde River.

ANALYSIS

I. Habitat Expansion

A. Big Game

1. Although it is felt that there is a conflict no data is available to indicate how critical the conflict is.
2. If the conflict is large (Item 1), then the land could be better used for wildlife due to the steep aspect of the area.
(See overlay)

II. Habitat Management

A. Big Game

1. Proper game harvest is a problem due to the closure of most private lands which surround the public lands. Hunter access would alleviate much of this problem.
2. Game cover is one of the basic requirements for nesting and hiding. The cover which is present should be preserved.

B. Upland Game Birds

1. Heavy snow hampers the birds in obtaining grit necessary for proper food assimilation.
2. Not enough is known about these aspects of the animal environment and habitat requirements. Perhaps most of this type of study should be handled cooperatively with state or other agencies.
3. This would add a small amount of deer winter feed, but it would also allow for public observation of the wildlife drawn by such a development.

WILDLIFE
"Habitat Expansion and Habitat Management"

RECOMMENDATION

C. Waterfowl

1. Improve streamside vegetation for cover feed by planting and control of livestock grazing.

D. Small Mammals

1. Study to see if any management for this group is desirable or feasible.
2. Study to determine if fur bearer habitat, especially for otter in the Grande Ronde River, can or should be improved.

E. Fish Habitat

1. Do not terminate livestock management on steep terrain.
2. Restrict grazing along shorelines.
3. Support legislation regulating feedlots to stop pollution of the waterways.

ANALYSIS

C. Waterfowl

1. The unit does not have a very high potential for water fowl but improvement of streamside vegetation would make it more conducive to them.

D. Small Mammals

1. Very little is known about these small mammals and their impact on the total ecology of the area. Perhaps an inventory should be made to determine their species, numbers and requirements.
2. Problem is similar to one above.

E. Fish Habitat

1. Grazing leases could be terminated but it would be next to impossible to fence and keep livestock off the scattered public domain ownership on the steep terrain. Rather, livestock should be controlled by some type of management plan on their areas.
2. This would protect streamside vegetation and overhanging banks.
3. Undoubtedly, this is one of the most dangerous situations facing the future of the fish habitat in the Grande Ronde River. Continued pollution may kill the existing species. Scavenger fish, such as carp, could replace the more desirable game fish. Accelerated action should be initiated to preclude this dangerous situation.

WILDLIFE
"Habitat Expansion and Habitat Management"

RECOMMENDATION

4. Discourage future dam development in or near the Unit.
5. Solicit cooperation in improving irrigation practices on the upper reaches of the watersheds.
6. Study sanitary facilities on the watershed.
7. Recommend higher standards in private logging operations.
8. Cooperate with state or other wildlife agencies in developing or improving spawning beds on sidestreams.
9. Cooperate with state or other wildlife agencies in inventorying sites and in constructing fish hatcheries within the Unit, if desirable.

ANALYSIS

4. Any such development would hinder or stop the runs of anadromous fish up the Grande Ronde River and its tributaries. This action would undoubtedly involve legislative procedures.
5. Improper irrigation practices (primarily the application of excess water) may be causing pollution by soil leaching and depositing soluble salts into the waterways. Also, sedimentation may be occurring from runoff from cultivated fields or meadows.
6. There may be small cities and/or individual residences dumping raw sewage into the streams. If so, this should be corrected through cooperation with the agencies capable of enforcing the sanitary laws.
7. Private logging operations in the past have failed to take precautions against thermal pollution by removing trees along streams.

Recommendations would suggest leaving buffer strips. Also, log skidding across streams must be stopped and logging slash should be removed from the streams.

RECREATION

Recreational use of public lands and streams within the Unit has increased steadily over the past several years. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Current data on the value of recreation to the local economy is not available in any accurate form. It is known, however, that recreation is one of the top three industries in the general area and contributes heavily to the Unit itself.

The recreation potential is by no means fully developed and the following recommendations are made to help enhance the future recreational use of public lands within the Unit.

RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION

1. Survey and identify public lands.
2. Acquire (through exchange) lands which would block up public lands along the principal waterways (Grande Ronde River, Snake River, and Joseph Creek).
3. Obtain legal access to the public lands.
4. Make a professional, in-depth inventory on recreation development zones.
5. Study the poisonous weed problem to determine if control is necessary.
6. Develop drinking water.

ANALYSIS

1. The Grande Ronde Unit is a very popular recreation area. Because private land owners are closing more and more of their lands, there is increased demand for use of the public lands. In order to properly use the public lands, they must be identified on the ground. This task should be initiated and carried out as quickly as possible to meet the extreme and increasing public pressure.
2. Blocking would improve the recreation potential of the lands.
3. Perhaps the largest recreational problem in the planning unit is legal access. This is a considerable amount of public land completely surrounded by private land that has no legal access. An aggressive easement program should be initiated to alleviate this situation.
4. This is necessary to determine the true, accurate needs. It would include information on present uses being made on the land. Projections for future uses and needs could then be made.
5. There are some poisonous plants in the area. Potential recreation sites should be inventoried to see if these plants will interfere with planned uses of the sites. If they do, chemical or mechanical control will be necessary.
6. Development of drinking water is crucial to the proper and sanitary use of the proposed recreation sites within the Unit.

RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION

7. Develop sanitary facilities along the Grande Ronde River between the Powatka road and Highway 129 on sites where future detailed plans indicate.
8. Provide and maintain litter stations in areas which show concentrated recreational use.
9. Restrict or remove livestock use on recreational development zones. This will require fencing or other protection in many instances. Fencing or other barriers should be implemented to exclude trespass by livestock grazing on adjacent private land.
10. Disturbed, over-grazed recreation sites should be reseeded to a good perennial grass species which would bind the soil.
11. Cooperate with other agencies to prevent further water pollution.
12. Attempt to maintain the relatively stable water levels and stream levels.

ANALYSIS

7. To cope with visitor pressure and to protect their health, vault type or flush toilets should be installed. If the latter are installed, then adequate disposal systems must be developed.
8. There are many sites throughout the Unit which receive considerable use, primarily along the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. Maintenance of these stations in remote areas is difficult and should be a reality before any stations are provided. The Asotin County Commissioners have stated they do not want them placed unless they are emptied and maintained by the placing organization. They do not want the responsibility.
9. In many situations, livestock grazing will not be compatible with recreation. Manure accumulation on the sites will detract from the aesthetics of the areas and will draw flies and other undesirable insects to them. Trampling and over grazing will cause dusty or muddy conditions.
10. This will aid in future maintenance of the sites and help perpetuate their usability.
11. Some livestock operators in the Unit have developed feedlots along the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. Refuse (manure, hay, etc.) from these lots is either pushed or allowed to wash into the waterways. Strict coordination with sanitation authorities should be established to correct this condition and prevent its occurrence in the future.
12. This might be accomplished through maintenance of the existing vegetative cover on the watershed and thus prevent accelerated runoff.

RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION

13. Refrain from harvesting timber along the Grande Ronde River and in a few sites along Joseph Creek.
14. Maintain roadless areas in certain areas.
15. Provide scenic overlooks where appropriate sites occur.
16. Develop small patches of alfalfa or other suitable vegetation on the flats along the Grande Ronde River for winter feed for deer to attract the animals for public observation and photographing.
17. Close certain roads or trails to vehicular traffic.
18. Limit oil, gas and geothermal leasing in the areas mentioned in Recommendation 14.

ANALYSIS

13. Logging would detract from the scenic beauty and recreational assets of these areas.
14. The presence of roads in these areas would detract from the historic and rugged nature which is a characteristic that should be protected for open space values and recreational opportunities. The flat bottom lands along Joseph Creek were once homesteaded. Materials for buildings as well as farming equipment was packed in piece by piece. Remnants of these articles and man's struggles to exist are available for viewing by hikers and horse riders and should not be detracted from by road construction.
15. Much of the scenic beauty of the Unit can be enjoyed from these vantage points without actually traveling to the less accessible areas. Cooperation with other agencies would be necessary in most cases.
16. With added emphasis on protection and enjoyment of natural resources, this would provide a place for those who can't hike to observe and photograph wildlife from close range.
17. Road closures may be indicated in some areas, however, any closures would require coordination with Forest Service and Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.
18. Oil and gas and geothermal activities are not compatible with an area where primitive, historic or other cultural values dominate. These activities would materially detract from the recreational experience in these areas.

RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION

19. Coordinate programs with the U.S. Forest Service in those areas adjacent to the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA).
20. Develop a river management plan for the Grande Ronde River.

ANALYSIS

19. The Bureau of Land Management's recreation planning should complement that in the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area since this new area is the dominant feature. The public should be dealt with in a consistent manner.
20. The Grande Ronde River is experiencing increased use and indications are that this will hold true in the future. The Bureau of Land Management is becoming more involved in the area of river management on a Bureau-wide basis.

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